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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/539,870	12/05/2005	Takamasa Iwaki	1083-9	6383
7590 Jack Schwartz & Associates Suite 1510 1350 Broadway New York, NY 10018			EXAMINER NGUYEN, SON T	
			ART UNIT 3643	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/539,870

Applicant(s)

IWAKI ET AL.

Examiner

Son T. Nguyen

Art Unit

3643

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 April 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-10,12-14,16-19 and 26-31 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-10,12-14,16-19,26-31 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/1/09
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. **Claims 1,3,5-9,27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo (5641482) in view of Ito et al. (5939088).**

For claim 1, Sugo teaches a floor mat laid in a small animal rearing cage for housing and rearing a small animal (col. 2, line 2), said floor mat being a sheet (because a mat is a flat sheet of material); wherein the sheet is formed of an improved cellulose fabric (col. 1, lines 56-66, col. 2, lines 1-2) comprising cellulose (col. 1, lines 56-66, col. 2, lines 1-2) having carboxyl groups (col. 2, lines 15-16) chemically bound (by graft polymerization, col. 2, lines 19-25) thereto wherein the cellulose having carboxyl groups chemically bound thereto is formed in a shape of a sheet; wherein the sheet has a temperature holding property to a degree that can keep the body temperature of the small animal (because of the material the sheet is made of, there will be some degree of temperature holding property). However, Sugo is silent about the sheet having a flexibility to a degree that can wrap the body of the small animal and a size that covers at least the entire abdomen of the small animal, where the flexibility and size are such that the sheet is capable of being seamlessly folded onto itself, even after being laid

down in a form where the sheet is randomly folded onto itself so as to form a fold large enough for the small animal to hide at least half of its body.

Ito et al. teach in the same field of endeavor of floor mat for animal as Sugo in which Ito et al.'s mat is a sheet 12 having a flexibility to a degree that can wrap the body of the small animal and a size that covers at least the entire abdomen of the small animal, where the flexibility and size are such that the sheet is capable of being seamlessly folded onto itself, even after being laid down in a form where the sheet is randomly folded onto itself so as to form a fold large enough for the small animal to hide at least half of its body (see fig. 4 for the flexibility of the sheet being folded onto itself seamlessly). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a sheet with the features as taught by Ito et al. in place of the sheet of Sugo in order to provide a sheet that is flexible and able to wrap around the animal for warmth.

For claims 3 & 7, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches wherein the sheet has a water absorption property (col. 1, line 62) and deodorization property (col. 2, lines 46-52 and see title of invention).

For claims 5 & 8, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches wherein the cellulose having carboxyl groups chemically bound thereto is formed with a graft polymerization method (col. 2, lines 9-55).

For claims 6 & 9, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches amount of carboxyl groups per dry fabric (col. 2, lines 17-18, and in example 2). However, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. does not specifically teach wherein improved

cellulose fabric contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the improved cellulose fabric of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric, since it has been held that where routine testing and general experimental conditions are present, discovering the optimum or workable ranges until the desired effect (more potent or not) is achieved involves only routine skill in the art.

For claim 27, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches wherein the cellulose having carboxyl groups chemically bound thereto is formed with a graft polymerization method (col. 2, lines 9-55).

3. Claims 4 & 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo as modified by Ito et al. as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Newton (2004/0163603).

Sugo as modified by Ito et al. is silent about wherein the sheet has a tearing resistance.

Newton teaches in the same field of endeavor of floor mat for animal as Sugo as modified by Ito et al., in which Newton employs a pet pad cover comprising a sheet that is made out of a tear resistance material ([0011]). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a tear resistance material as taught by Newton for the sheet of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. in order to prevent an animal from tearing the sheet.

4. **Claims 10,13,14,16-19,26,29,31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo (as above) in view of Ito et al. (as above) and Otsuji et al. (2001/0009142).**

For claim 10, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. teaches the floor mat with the features as explained above (teaching of Sugo) and the sheet with flexibility and folding property as explained in the above (teaching of Ito et al.). In addition, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. teach wherein the sheet has a temperature holding property to a degree that can keep the body temperature of the small animal (because of the material the sheet is made of, there will be some degree of temperature holding property). Not explained is the small animal rearing cage comprising a rearing box having a floor and a wall provided at a circumference of the floor.

Otsuji et al. teach in the same field of endeavor of floor mat for animal as Sugo as modified by Ito et al., in which Otsuji et al. employ a rearing box 2 having a floor and a wall provided at a circumference of the floor, and a mat 1 laid therein the box. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to place the sheet of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. in a rearing box as taught by Otsuji et al. in order to keep the sheet confined so that the animal will not drag the sheet everywhere.

For claims 13 & 18, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches amount of carboxyl groups per dry fabric (col. 2, lines 17-18, and in example 2). However, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. does not specifically teach wherein improved cellulose fabric contains 40 to 140 millimole

carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the improved cellulose fabric of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric, since it has been held that where routine testing and general experimental conditions are present, discovering the optimum or workable ranges until the desired effect (more potent or not) is achieved involves only routine skill in the art.

For claims 14,17 & 29, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches wherein the cellulose having carboxyl groups chemically bound thereto is formed with a graft polymerization method (col. 2,lines 9-55).

For claims 16 & 26, Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. (emphasis on Sugo) teaches wherein the sheet has a water absorption property (col. 1,line 62) and deodorization property (col. 2,lines 46-52 and see title of invention).

For claims 19 & 31, it appears from fig. 4 of Ito et al. that the sheet is larger than the rearing box of Otsuji et al. since the sheet of Ito et al. is folded several times. However, if not, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the sheet of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. be larger in size than the floor area of the rearing box in order to better soak up urine or the like by provide coverage for the whole floor area, and to provide a larger cushion area for the animal.

5. **Claims 12 & 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. as applied to claim 10 above, and further in view of Newton (as above).**

Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. is silent about wherein the sheet has a tearing resistance.

Newton teaches in the same field of endeavor of floor mat for animal as Sugo as modified by Ito et al., in which Newton employs a pet pad cover comprising a sheet that is made out of a tear resistance material ([0011]). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a tear resistance material as taught by Newton for the sheet of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. and Otsuji et al. in order to prevent an animal from tearing the sheet.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 4/28/09 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argued that contrary to the present claimed arrangement, Sugo only describes a deodorizing material and a process for producing the same. The material used by Sugo is completely unlike and does not disclose or suggest a "floor mat being a sheet having a flexibility to a degree that can wrap the body of the small animal and a size that covers at least the entire abdomen of the small animal, where the flexibility and size are such that the sheet is capable of being seamlessly folded onto itself., and wherein the sheet has a temperature holding property to a degree that can keep the body temperature of the small animal" as

recited in claim 1 of the present arrangement. As seen in the present specification, prior art systems such as Sugo, describe deodorizing materials that can be broken into multiple pieces, prevent dirt on the floor and can be disposed as combustible garbage after use.

Sugo does not only describes a deodorizing material and a process for producing the same as alleged by Applicant. Clearly, from col. 2, lines 1-2, Sugo teaches that his material can be in various form such as a mat, which is the same as claimed by Applicant, i.e. a floor mat. A mat used for animal bedding is known in the art for being a flexible sheet of material and not a rigid material. Of course, the degree of flexibility depends, however, Applicant's claimed language does not define such degree of flexibility, hence, a mat (such as that taught by Sugo) is considered a flexible material. Note that the claimed language states "flexibility to a degree", which is extremely broad and can cover a wide range of degree of flexibility. In addition, in the rejection above and in the non-final rejection mailed on 11/28/08, the Examiner never stated that Sugo teaches the mat being a sheet, thus, Applicant is arguing something that is irrelevant to that of Sugo. In any event, a sheet teaching for bedding is nothing new in the art, and as demonstrated, taught by Ito et al. Hence, one of ordinary skill in the art would realize that Sugo teaches a mat but does not state that the mat is in a form of a sheet, to which Ito et al. teach, therefore, one would be motivated to combine Ito et al. to that of Sugo for a teaching of a mat being a sheet to provide a sheet that is flexible and able to wrap around the animal for warmth. By having the mat of Sugo be a sheet as taught by Ito et al. in no way changes the inventive concept of Sugo because Sugo teaches that the

article can be in the form of a mat and mats are known to be in a sheet form and flexible.

As for the size argument, Sugo's mat being a sheet as modified by Ito et al. is clearly capable of covering at least the entire abdomen of the small animal, and capable of being seamlessly folded onto itself (as shown in fig. 4 of Ito). As for the temperature argument, again, the claimed language of "to a degree" is broad, thus, the material for the mat of either Sugo and/or Ito et al. has some degree of a temperature holding property to a degree to keep the body temperature of animal. The paper material used in Sugo has temperature holding property to a degree that can keep the body temperature of the small animal because paper are known to be used in animal bedding for insulation or the like.

Applicant argued that Sugo is silent with respect to the importance of flexibility and temperature holding property of the fabric, as in the present claimed arrangement.

Sugo does not have to state word for word the importance of his invention. This is more of an intended use of the device. The fact of the matter is that the mat of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. is capable of providing flexibility and temperature holding property because it has all the structural elements as claimed by Applicant, thus, it can be flexible and temperature warming. In addition, the importance of flexibility and temperature holding property in Applicant's sheet is really nothing new in the art because most, if not all, animal bedding material considered flexibility and temperature as important to keep the animal warm.

Applicant argued that the mat in Sugo is composed of non-woven fabric or pulp flakes. Such rigid materials cannot disclose or suggest flexible materials are "formed of an improved cellulose fabric" as recited in claim 1 of the present arrangement.

It appears that Applicant is making a mere allegation regarding the mat of Sugo being rigid without any sound evidence of such teaching from Sugo. It is requested that Applicant provides excerpt from Sugo where he states that the mat is rigid. In addition, if the paper material used in Sugo is considered a rigid material by Applicant, then it is believed that Applicant's mat is also rigid because clearly from paragraph [0014][0046], Applicant's chosen material is also paper. Moreover, surface treated vinyl sheet is hardly that soft, thus, Applicant's material of choice appears to be quite rigid material. Note that the pulp flakes are of choice because Sugo states in col. 2, lines 1-5, that the article can be in various forms such as mat, non-woven fabric, OR flakes.

Applicant argued that the Office Action on page 4 (with respect to the claim 2 features which have been included in amended claim 1) concedes that "because of the material the sheet is made of [in Sugo with Ito], there will be some degree of temperature holding property." Applicants respectfully disagree. The inflexible mat made of non-woven fabric or wood chips in Sugo provides no suggestion or disclosure of the claimed "wherein the sheet has a temperature holding property to a degree that can keep the body temperature of the small animal." Applicants respectfully submit that nowhere in Sugo (and Ito) is there suggestion or disclosure that the material used "has a temperature holding property to a degree

that can keep the body temperature of the small animal" as recited in amended claim 1 of the present arrangement.

Sugo uses paper to make his article, thus, even though Sugo does not state word for word, one of ordinary skill in the art would know that paper has temperature holding property. This is implicitly taught in Sugo. In addition, Applicant's employed the same material, i.e. paper, thus, why would Sugo's paper not have any temperature holding property while Applicant's does? In any event, paper used in Sugo clearly has temperature holding property to a degree.

Applicant argued that the towel in Ito (shown in Fig. 4, cited by the Office Action) is merely a display of a perspective view. There is no suggestion or disclosure in Ito (with Sugo) of "a sheet having a flexibility to a degree that can wrap the body of the small animal and a size that covers at least the entire abdomen of the small animal ... even after being laid down in a form where the sheet is randomly folded onto itself so as to form a fold large enough for the small animal to hide at least half of its body..., and wherein the sheet has a temperature holding property to a degree that can keep the body temperature of the small animal" as recited in claim 1 of the present arrangement. Ito (with Sugo) is silent to the importance of temperature holding properties of the fabric.

Clearly, fig. 4 of Ito et al. is not just merely a display of a perspective view, it is an embodiment of Ito's invention to show that the invention is a mat/sheet that can be folded. The sheet of Ito clearly is capable of allowing an animal to hide at least ½ of its body therein. Applicant, again, is arguing an intended use, to which Ito's invention is

capable of performing the intended use (see MPEP 2114). Note that Ito was not relied on for a temperature holding property because Sugo already teaches this feature in his mat.

Applicant argued that the chemically bound carboxyl group of the claimed arrangement provides the sheet with a deodorizing property during the chemical binding process. This is fundamentally different from Ito which merely mentions that the sheet is either impregnated with or painted with DL- pyrrolidone carboxylate. DL-pyrrolidone carboxylate is NOT equivalent to the chemically bound carboxyl group of the claimed arrangement because DL-pyrrolidone carboxylate is a carboxylic acid salt which does not have a deodorant function. Specifically, in Ito, the DL-pyrrolidone carboxylate impregnated or painted on the sheet would be lost if the sheet was washed for reuse.

Ito was not relied on for chemically bound carboxyl group nor impregnated with or painted with DL- pyrrolidone carboxylate, thus, the argument is mooted.

Applicant argued that even if a combination of the systems of Sugo and Ito could be made, the combination, similar to the individual systems of Sugo and Ito, would not make the present claimed arrangement unpatentable. The combined system would describe a mat composed of non-woven fabric or a mass of flakes. The mat would neutralize odors such as ammonia, triethylamine, etc. (see col. 2, lines 46-47 of Sugo). The combined system would also describe a towel sheet that is either impregnated with or painted with DL-pyrrolidone carboxylate.

Applicant appears to be arguing something that Sugo and Ito are not relied on in the above rejection. For example, nowhere in Sugo did he states that his mat was rigid or that it is required that the article is formed in a mass of flakes. Ito, again, was not relied on for impregnated with or painted with DL-pyrrolidone carboxylate. As clearly as can be, the rejection above states that Ito was relied on for a teaching of a mat is a sheet 12 having a flexibility to a degree that can wrap the body of the small animal and a size that covers at least the entire abdomen of the small animal, where the flexibility and size are such that the sheet is capable of being seamlessly folded onto itself, even after being laid down in a form where the sheet is randomly folded onto itself so as to form a fold large enough for the small animal to hide at least half of its body (see fig. 4 for the flexibility of the sheet being folded onto itself seamlessly). Hence, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ a sheet with the features as taught by Ito et al. in place of the sheet of Sugo in order to provide a sheet that is flexible and able to wrap around the animal for warmth.

Applicant argued that Ito and Sugo fail to disclose or suggest that the "improved cellulose fabric contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric" as recited in claim 9 of the present arrangement. Specifically, as discussed above, Ito merely describes using an inferior and non-equivalent chemical (DL-pyrrolidone carboxylate) in a non-equivalent manner (either painting the chemical on a sheet or impregnating a sheet with the chemical).

Argument against Ito for a teaching of carboxyl groups is mooted, for Ito was not relied on for such teaching.

As mentioned in the rejection above,, Sugo teaches amount of carboxyl groups per dry fabric (col. 2, lines 17-18, and in example 2). However, Sugo does not specifically teach wherein improved cellulose fabric contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the improved cellulose fabric of Sugo as modified by Ito et al. contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl groups per 100 g of dry fabric, since it has been held that where routine testing and general experimental conditions are present, discovering the optimum or workable ranges until the desired effect (more potent or not) is achieved involves only routine skill in the art. The concentration range as claimed by Applicant is merely a preferable range because it would depend on how potent one wishes the mat to have to get rid of odor. This is merely routine testing and experimentation in order to find the desired effect one wishes to have for odor elimination for the mat. It is not unexpected and it is not new inventive concept nor critical range.

Applicant argued that similarly to Ito with Sugo, Newton fails to disclose or suggest the "said floor mat being a sheet having a flexibility to a degree that can wrap the body of the small animal and a size that covers at least the entire abdomen of the small animal, where the flexibility and size are such that the sheet is capable of being seamlessly folded onto itself, even after being laid down in a form where the sheet is randomly folded onto itself so as to form a fold large

enough for the small animal to hide at least half of its body ... sheet is formed of an improved cellulose fabric comprising cellulose having carboxyl groups chemically bound thereto wherein the cellulose having carboxyl groups chemically bound thereto is formed in a shape of a sheet" as in the claimed arrangement.

Newton was not relied on for the features as argued. As mentioned in the above rejection, Newton is relied on for a tear resistance animal bedding, thus, see above for explanation.

Applicant argued that unlike the claimed arrangement, Otsuji describes an absorbent mat having a flat shape and that is useful for treating pet excreta. The mat has an absorbing base material of at least one of plant fiber and pulp, an antimicrobial surface active agent or a combination of a surface active agent and an antimicrobial agent, and at least one of a binder, a crosslinking agent, and water. Otsuji (similar to Sugo and Ito) does not disclose or suggest a floor mat formed with a sheet that is flexible and has temperature holding property of the fabric, as in the present claimed arrangement.

Otsuji was not relied on for the features as argued. As mentioned in the above rejection, Otsuji is relied on for know concept of putting an animal bedding mat in a rearing box to confined the mat.

Applicant argued that Otsuji is fundamentally different from the claimed arrangement because Otsuji describes a mat that is laid in the draining board of an animal cage and is intended to absorb excreted material. The mat described by

Otsuji includes cationic and anionic surface active agents (see para. 0039) that, if placed in direct contact with an animal would be harmful thereto.

Otsuji was not relied on for the features as argued. As mentioned in the above rejection, Otsuji is relied on for know concept of putting an animal bedding mat in a rearing box to confined the mat.

Applicant argued that claim 13 is also considered patentable because Otsuji (with Sugo Ito) fails to disclose or suggest chemically bound carboxyl groups wherein "the improved cellulose fabric contains 40 to 140 millimole carboxyl group per 100 grams of dry fabric." As discussed with above with respect to claim 9, Sugo and Ito do not disclose or suggest these similar features found in both claims 9 and 13.

Otsuji was not relied on for the features as argued, thus, the argument is mooted. As for Sugo and Ito, see above for response.

Conclusion

7. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Son T. Nguyen whose telephone number is 571-272-6889. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thu from 10:00am to 5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Peter M. Poon can be reached on 571-272-6891. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Son T. Nguyen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3643